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# THOUGHTS

ON THE

OLD AND NEW

# *ADMINISTRATIONS,*

WITH

## A Comparative View

OF

## THEIR CLAIMS TO PUBLIC FAVOR.

*BY A CIVIL VOLUNTEER.*

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# Thoughts

ON THE

*OLD* AND *NEW*

ADMINISTRATIONS.

WE are enjoined not to speak ill of the dead. This restraint on posthumous censure, if ever proper, must be understood as applying only in favour of the ashes of individuals, who, being of little note when living, should be permitted to rest without the disturbance of private resentment, but cannot be supposed to extend to public bodies, or the members of a State, whose actions having been of high importance to society, have ever been deemed fit objects for historic animadversion. If such be the case with

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those who have been long committed to the grave, it cannot be thought a violation of decorum to examine the conduct of others, who, being only politically defunct, have, doubtless, left behind them friends enough, who in hope of their resurrection, will lend themselves to their defence; a service seldom bestowed upon such as are gone beyond the possibility of recal. Under this licence it is that I enter into an examination of the conduct of our late Ministers, in order to contrast it with that of their successors.

The late administration was made up of very discordant materials: the heads of it having been long engaged in acrimonious opposition, it would have seemed strange, that they should ever have been compacted into one mass, had not numerous precedents prepared us for the possibility of such an union.

The

The chief of that administration carried much to it in the lustre of his name, and the powers of his understanding.—Had it been his good fortune to have fallen into better company, or to have maintained, when with them, the same inflexible adherence, which he manifested elsewhere to his own opinions, he would perhaps have avoided many of those errors into which he was misled by the violence of his colleagues, and have preserved a better claim to the public esteem than what he now enjoys: as it is, he must be contented to partake with them that odium which results from the worst system of measures, that has issued from any cabinet since the reign of the unfortunate James.

One of their first acts upon which I have to remark, is the late war with France, which, if not actually solicited on our part, as many have contended, was certainly

certainly not avoided, as it might have been, with a little temper, and diplomatic address.

France it is true was turbulent, and to her neighbours a little rude; but she was so, only because exasperated by the declared enmity of two great continental powers, and the secret machinations of others equally hostile. She was, besides, in the crisis of a revolution, in magnitude unexampled in the annals of the world. If, on such an occasion, the fermentation of spirits, not otherwise much disposed to be temperate, should have broken forth in frothy and insulting declamation, it might have been overlooked in consideration of the transitoriness of her ruling factions, which succeeded to each other with the rapidity of objects dancing in a camera, and were too evanescent to provoke our anger. But Mr. Burke had sounded, with a powerful blast, the trumpet

trumpet of alarm. He told us that war was necessary, and certainly he was much better paid for the fatal counsel, than he had before been for much wiser opinions, which could not obtain even the honour of a patient hearing.

War was, therefore, declared; and soon after, it was pronounced, by those who partook the opinions of Mr. Burke, to be an interminable war.

Wise Ministers, before they embrace the desperate expedient of having recourse to arms, generally reflect, not only on the provocation which they may have received, but also on the probable consequences that may ensue from their use. If they have reason to think the issue may be unfavorable, though the cause be just, they will temporize, and even digest an insult, which cannot be resented with effect. On this head, therefore, they either reasoned not at all, or

they

they reasoned ill; for if they had condescended to have turned their eyes upon those pages of history which are occupied with the revolutions of nations, they would have been apprised of the terrible effects that were to be expected from the enthusiasm of so great a people as the French, combating, as they were instructed to believe, in the defence of their newly acquired liberty. They would have calculated less on the power of the confederacy, strong as it appeared to be, than on the energy of the resistance; and would have embraced in their reflections the possible desertion of allies, of incompatible interests, momentarily united, and perhaps only assuming the semblance of union, the more effectually to deceive and to betray each other. If all these reflections escaped our Ministers, as they appear to have done, they were ill fitted for the important stations

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in which they were unfortunately placed. But if they erred thus fundamentally in the formation of their designs, they did so still more in the means which they employed for their execution; for excepting our conquests out of Europe, where scarcely the shadow of an enemy presented to oppose them, all the rest was discomfiture and miscarriage; and that not so much arising from the invincible force of the enemy, as from the wretched combination of our own plans. It would be inconsistent with the brevity proposed to be observed in this work, to enter into a minute detail of the errors which led to our successive defeats; but if we take a geographical survey of the different points to which our attacks were directed, from the Helder, in the North, where we were obliged to ransom our rear-guard of eight thousand men, to Toulon, in the South, whence we escaped

with

with somewhat better fortune, we shall find irresistible reasons to conclude either that our Generals were remiss in the performance of their duty, or that our Ministers were unwise in the formation of the plans which they committed to their execution. If the former, no doubt they would have vindicated themselves from the reproaches attendant on miscarriage, by resigning their officers to the scrutinies which were repeatedly moved for in Parliament; but by refusing so to do, and in resisting every enquiry when questions of that nature were proposed, they seemed plainly to intimate an apprehension that enquiry, if granted, might lead to discoveries tending to their own disgrace, from which they hoped to escape by covering their proceedings with the veil of a parliamentary *supersedeas*.

In that respect, indeed, no man was ever better served than Mr. Pitt. He furnished

nished the arguments, and his friends the conclusion. Whatever was defective in the one, was sure to be supplied by the other. His parliamentary majority was an effectual panacea for the cure of every ministerial disorder.

I have mentioned only two points at the extremes of the Continent, where repulse attended our attempts; but were I disposed to enlarge in detail, I might enumerate many more, in the intermediate space, where we were equally unsuccessful; as at Ostend, at Dunkirk, at Quiberon, at Ferrol, and at Corsica. The expedition to Teneriffe, I believe, was not theirs, but Lord St. Vincent's; and there, where no galleons were to be found, even the intrepidity of Nelson could not ensure a victory.

On the other hand, if Ireland was preserved from the attacks of the enemy, it was not by the wise provision made by

Ministers

Ministers for its defence, but by the winds, which generously lent their aid for its rescue. Had Hoche landed his army in that island, when he made an effort so to do, what power was there of equal force to contest the country with him? I tremble at a consequence escaped only by fortuitous interposition!

But if our Ministers miscarried in so many of their attempts against the enemy, they must be allowed to have been very successful in their domestic warfare. A campaign seldom passed over, without their obtaining some signal triumphs over the subjects of their own state: their suspension of the Habeas Corpus, their Bills of Sedition, which, under the pretext of obviating disturbances, effectually silenced even those animadversions in which we had ever been privileged to indulge; their imprisonments, without charges; their prosecutions, without conviction;

viction; and their convictions without proofs, are so many memorable instances of their tyrannies, which will be long remembered, and are now recalled with the greater detestation, by the contrast which we are compelled to draw between their conduct and that of their successors.

If, in speaking of the late Administration, I have mentioned only the name of Mr. Pitt, it is because under that name was comprised all the excellence which rendered it, at any time, respectable, or obtained for it any degree of the public favour; but even that gentleman's most valuable endowment was his eloquence; that transcendent, it is true; but were we to shut our ears to the seductions of his discourse, and to look only to his measures, we shall meet abundant reason to acknowledge, that there never was so much practical folly, united

to

to such speculative wisdom. His friends say that he was unfortunate. I admit that he was unfortunate in the connexions which he formed, but he was unwise in forming those connexions; and granting all that can be said in palliation of errors too numerous to be overlooked, yet, as he was the head and soul of his party, he must be held as peculiarly responsible for measures which he must be supposed to have directed; and as those measures exhibit such a train of miscarriages, we are compelled to acknowledge imbecility of execution at least, if not of design; and as the renown of his great father was largely derived from the series of successes attendant on his plans, it is not unfair, from a parity of reasoning, to infer a defect of wisdom in the son, from uniformity of miscarriage.

The ingratitude of the Athenians to their most illustrious citizens, who had

served

served them well, in subjecting them to the ostracism, has furnished a theme of eternal reproach to that enlightened people; but no reproach could be more unjustly applied, for it was not ingratitude, but a wise regard to their independence, which dictated the necessary measure. They knew early what we have learned late, that statesmen, like other servants, though at first they enter into place with modest claims, and good characters, are yet apt, by a long continuance therein, to become insolent and vain, erecting themselves into tyrants, and controlling their masters, by whose wages they are subsisted. Twenty years of ministerial rule, with its concomitant patronage, are enough to intoxicate the most happily organized head; whilst that of a city alderman so topples with the brief honours of a mayoralty, as to be long in recovering its natural balance.

Some

Some effect of that kind may, perhaps, have been experienced by Mr. Pitt. He was so long on our shoulders, that he began to think himself taller than the rest of the nation. When, therefore, I rejoice in finding him once more merged into society, and restored to the use of his own legs, it is from a hope that he will profit by his experience, and that if ever he should return to power, it will be with chastized pretensions.

But, indeed, in what situation can Mr. Pitt be placed, where his services are more likely to benefit the nation, than that wherein we now behold him? As the ruler of a state, in turbulent times, he has been tried, and miscarried. As a parliamentary tactitian, his abilities have been universally acknowledged: to tactics, therefore, let all the powers of his ample mind be hereafter devoted, and we may indulge a reasonable hope, that

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one of these days, he will turn out an accomplished general. Command being his delight, when his Cinque Port Volunteers are drilled to the same perfection of discipline that formerly distinguished his other troops, I trust we shall find in him and them, an impenetrable rampart against the attacks of the enemy. I subscribe, therefore, without reluctance, to the praise which his activity has obtained, in preparing for the ensuing conflict; though, in so doing, he has only acquitted himself of a duty peculiarly incumbent on him, as one of the principal causes of our being placed in the perilous situation wherein we now are. To the last war has been undoubtedly owing the prodigious aggrandizement of France, which now overawes all her continental neighbours, and so threatens us, that we are obliged, in our defence, to become an armed nation; and (it is to

be

be feared) of purchasing our political security at the expence of our moral degradation.

It has been asked, "Why we are at war?" The answer is easy: We are at war now, because we were so then; without that, this would not have been necessary; for had we not coalesced, there would have been no coalition; Europe would have been free, and France within her ancient limits, distracted by internal convulsions, and anxious only for the settlement of her own affairs.

When I impute this to Mr. Pitt, it is not that I mean to exclude others, infinitely more guilty, from the reproaches which I address to him only, as being the foreman of the Cabinet, and the organ of their decisions, many of which, there is reason to think, he did not internally approve. Mr. Windham did not, as he has very honestly told us; but that

was

was when there was any tendency in the Cabinet to a peace; and if his candour be remembered, I hope the occasion that extorted it will not be forgotten.

Mr. Pitt had a very able second in the House of Commons, in Mr. Dundas, now Lord Melville, a gentleman possessed of the accumulated experience of half a dozen administrations, of which he formed a part, and who was still so little fatigued with his past labours, that he had no objection to have taken a share with the present one also, as we are told in the "Cursory Remarks;" but his negociation having failed, he has since withdrawn to the North, where it is not to be supposed that a spirit like his, will long remain in inglorious inaction. Indeed his presence there seems to have been already manifested by its effects; for Faction, which had so long slumbered in that part of the Kingdom, now uprears

her head; and it is difficult to discover whether it be Mr. Addington or Bonaparte that she most threatens with her hostilities. It seems as if an apprehension had gone abroad, that, by the absence of that noble person from the Administration, the loaves and fishes, which used to frequent that coast, have escaped from their natural latitude, and all wits are at work, to recover them back again. Even the grave Judges, who have heretofore devoted all their faculties (certainly not too much) to subjects appertaining to their profession, now bestow a portion of them on the science of politics, and instruct us how kingdoms are to be best defended. They feel, or affect, an extraordinary alarm for their dear country, which they represent as being the most threatened by the enemy; but their southern neighbours, who have their eyes turned upon the fields on this side

of

of the Tweed, do more justice to the judgment of their enemies, and suppose that their unerring instinct will guide them to a more productive range of depredation.

One of the learned Lords, more forward in this business than the rest, being somewhat aware that the origin of his motions might be misconstrued, has been at singular pains to repel (by anticipation) the charge of his having acted under influence. He claims all the odium exclusively to himself; and it would be unkind to deny him so reasonable a gratification: Lord Meadowbank shall be acknowledged to have deserved the worst that can be said of a man, who, at this juncture, endeavours to sow discontents against the Government, by telling his countrymen that they are neglected. Were we less disposed to give credit to his declarations, we should certainly have suspected,

pected, from his speeches, somewhat like the dawnings of an opposition, originating in a quarter still higher than the Bench.

To Lord Grenville, another of our late Ministers, I attribute all the praise that is due to a man, to whom nature refused every thing but the power of perseverance, but who, by the exertion of that useful faculty, has obtained political instruction enough to qualify him for a subordinate place in any administration, where detail only is required; but not to guide a State, constructed like ours, on a basis of liberal freedom. Higher he ought not to aim; yet, by his activity in opposition, it seems as if he had not abandoned the hope of recovering all that he has lost. Heaven grant that he may be disappointed of his wishes, if such they be!

But of all the members that composed the late Administration, Mr. Windham is the

the one whose return to power the nation ought to contemplate with the greatest apprehension; and yet his anxiety to obtain it has placed him at the head of an opposition, though opposition in a man who, like him, is so generally in the wrong, of itself presumes rectitude in the party whom he opposes. Upon every occasion he has uniformly recommended the most violent measures, and has testified an abhorrence of every thing like pacific accommodation. He sets little value either upon human life, or human opinions, and hates liberty, the militia, and the volunteers, as he loves despotism and a standing army; and finding, in the conduct of the present administration, the severest censures of his own, he has sworn their destruction; and thinks no instrument too vile to accomplish it. Should his wishes be so far realized, let him not be

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the man who is to succeed to their places; for Cobbett's pages, should it be their undeserved fate to escape the spoil of the Pastry-cook, will exhibit a faithful record of sentiments, proving how much fitter he is to be the Minister of a Despot, than of the mild Sovereign of Imperial Britain.

In Lord Spenser, had he not been one of the promoters of the late war, I should have seen but little to condemn; for much is to be approved in his Administration of the Navy. He took it with energies exhausted from the torpid hands of his predecessor Lord Chatham, and raised it to an eminence which it had never before attained. Through the whole war whatever was effected, with very few exceptions, was by the instrumentality of the Navy under his direction. They, indeed, achieved glorious things; yet could not his subsequent

conduct

conduct atone for his original error in leading us to the labyrinth of misery in which we are now entangled, and from which there appears no visible outlet.

As to the other members of the late Administration, they are but little indebted to notice, either individually or collectively; for as they always remained in the back ground, it would be cruel to draw from thence merely to exhibit them as objects of detestation. By yielding their places to better men, and greater lovers of their country, they have made some little atonement for their past errors; and as it is the only one they are able to make, we will accept it in composition of their debt, and absolve them like bankrupts from all future claims, provided they make no fresh endeavours to emerge from the obscurity in which nature originally designed them to have remained.

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The same amnesty might, perhaps, have been extended to the principals of the party, had they not foreclosed themselves of the benefit of such a grace, by their movement in obstructing the measures of the present odministration, and by their efforts to render them as odious as they themselves deserve to be.

Some of them, indeed, have been too wise to appear openly in the ranks of opposition. Like Sharp-Shooters they direct their attacks from behind the covert of trees and hedges; but they are discovered by the smoke that surrounds them, and the activity of the emissaries who are employed in the fabrication of calumny, of which the most copious torrent has flowed from a pen so long hacknied in that kind of work, as to accredit any character to which his attacks are directed. Had the Political

Register

Register no other contributor than the person whose name is prefixed, I should never have descended to have mentioned it; for imprudent must that contest be, where, from the meanness of the antagonist, even victory would be a disgrace; but as Mr. Windham has given his imprimatur to the sentiments contained in it, and which appear so analogous to those which he has delivered elsewhere, as to leave no doubt of his paternity, they acquire an importance which give them some better title to our notice.

Mr. Windham, to whom I return again with pleasure, is a gentleman who might be read and heard without disgust, if he placed his glory less in a defiance of common sense. No thesis, however repugnant to it, being too difficult for him to attempt to support. Boxing and Bull-Baiting have been honoured with his panegyrics; and laborious have been

his

his efforts to recover the nation to a taste for barbarous pastimes, with a view to invigorate their courage. As Rousseau acquired a reputation by his paradoxes, so Mr. Windham hopes to obtain one, too; but great as his dexterity in perplexing truth may be, he is still far short of his original, and will be late in arriving at an equal eminence of fame, though he may meet all the odium attached to the endeavour.

To deny him the little merit which can result from eloquence, not regulated by discretion, is to withold that which, if granted, would speak very little in his praise, for if mere eloquence could have made a great man, Lord Rosslyn would not have been so far removed from that character; and yet the best speech he ever made, and one which, perhaps, was never exceeded in power of words, lost America to this country, so dangerous

is it to talk well without thinking justly!

As Mr. Windham was one of the principal causes of our being alarmed into the late war, (not war only, but even such contentions as any ways resemble it, being his delight,) it is no wonder that when the Peace came which deprived him of so pleasant a source of gratification, and, necessarily, preceded as it was by the loss of his place; that we should find him among the loudest and most virulent declaimers against the administration, who have done him this double injury; accordingly he leads the opposition in the lower house, and imagining that full justice cannot be done to speeches so excellent as his own, by a simple report of the text, he has retained a commentator in his service, whose special duty it is to palliate such passages as have issued so rapidly from his brain,

to

to expound others whose metaphysical obscurity stands in need of illustration, to prevent the whole from sliding into oblivion by incessant repetitions, and to vilify his enemies.

For this latter service, who so fit as the Editor of the Political Register? He had no delicacies to overrule, no scruples to subdue: he had no occasion to harrass invention for abusive epithets; they were his vernacular idiom, the patrimony of his birth, improved by education in his early youth, and perfected in manhood by the production of twelve volumes of the most venomous libels that ever disgraced the press. Nature could not have supplied an instrument more appropriate to Mr. Windham's purposes. This honourable office being conferred upon Mr. Cobbett, well does he repay the confidence reposed in him by the zeal with which he fulfils the trust.

Of

Of all the qualifications requisite to a Political Journalist, impudence is unquestionably the most useful; as it defies reason and fact, and there is no convicting it to the humiliation of a blush.

Without this power who could have hazarded the strange dogmas which we meet with in that factious print? such as that parliamentary proceedings ought not to be reported by the Press; that the Press itself is a hurtful engine; that a national bankruptcy is not only a desirable thing, but an event absolutely necessary to the salvation of the country. Indeed, he carries his indignation on this head so far, that he quarrels with the patriotic society for their endeavours to uphold the funds, even by a purchase. I should apprehend that this Mr. Cobbett must stand pretty clear from any criminal connexion with those funds which he thus labours to depreciate, or he must

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be very ungrateful for the benefits which they confer upon him.

His batteries are levelled also at every other operation of the Bank. Their notes are his abhorrence, and there is reason to apprehend, that in his further progress in reform, even the precious metals, gold and silver, will be banished from the commonwealth; and that, like that other lawgiver of old, he will be for supplying their place with some of his more precious brass.

That commerce may be resigned to perdition, we know to be the respectable opinion of Mr. Windham; and indeed what share he may have had, in the other rants of fancy contained in that work, and what Mr. Cobbett, it is rather difficult to ascertain, though we have reason to imagine that no sentiment would have obtained a place therein, of which the Right Honourable Gentleman much disapproved.

approved. It is impossible however, to reconcile to such an idea the invectives uttered in the same work, against the Volunteer Army; for though they are not a part of our defence which he contemplates with satisfaction, yet as he has condescended to enrol himself among them, he, surely, would not consent that they should be stigmatized with the epithet of cowards, whom flagellation only could persuade to fight. Indeed I admit, that though this term be at first collectively applied, it is afterwards qualified by certain wholesome exceptions, just sufficient to obviate disagreeable discussion. In short, it is strange to think, when a man has got his goose-quill in his hand, and is in a happy mood for reform, what havoc he will make with received opinions; how he will brush them away, like cobwebs

with

with the feather, whilst, with the pen he traces plans of infallible wisdom!

Of our present Ministers I once thought not so favourably as at present. I considered them as being the occasional substitutes of those who preceded them; but since I find that they stand on more independent ground, and that they have been honoured not only with the asperities of Mr. Pitt's friends, but with the sarcasms of Mr. Pitt himself, I entertain a much better hope of them.

The peace, their first measure, had the full approbation of my soul; though some doubt might remain of its permanency from the enormous power of the enemy with whom we had contended, and the ambition of the chief who directs their affairs. I should imagine, that it was never considered, by any man, otherwise than as a peace of experiment, entered

tered into on the part of our Ministers, with a most anxious wish to extend its duration, if they found our adversaries possessed of the same amicable views, or to resume hostilities, if circumstances demanded them. Most deeply is it to be regretted that they have so done; yet, short as the peace has been, it was well worth all the sacrifices made to obtain it, were it only in having freed the nation from the former unjust war, and thereby converted us from aggressors into defenders. It has afforded to Europe, by the magnitude of our concessions, an unequivocal proof of our pacific disposition; and, which is of still more value, it has united us among ourselves (before divided) into one homogeneous sentiment, as to the equity of the contest in which we are now engaged.

Nor have other fruits been wanting from the peace, as it has destroyed

one army of the enemy, and that not a small one, by their enterprize against Saint Domingo; put in peril their fleet; given a fatal blow to their reviving commerce; and drawn out of their exchequer, much larger sums than the pillage of Hanover can ever replace.

Yet, had none of these advantages resulted from the peace, still there was found one, much greater, in the sixteen months respite from the calamities attendant on war: happy interval! for of all the evils with which mankind are afflicted that doubtless must be considered as the greatest.

As to the objections to the peace, on what were they founded? on the restitution of the greatest part of our conquests to the enemy: but let it be remembered, that those conquests were, almost all, obtained without the effusion of blood; and will, probably, be recovered again with

equal

equal facility, whenever our disposable force shall enable us to look for foreign conquests: several of those, which we restored to the enemy, having already returned to our dominion, and the rest waiting in anxious expectation of the grateful summons.

But should it even cost us many lives and much money to get back again what we abandoned at the peace, still shall we be enormous gainers by the sixteen months cessation of colonial warfare, every month of which, had that continued, would have cost us more both in men and money, than will now be expended on their re-capture. In short, we have gained every thing by the peace, but duration, which it was not in our power to command, and lost nothing, but the approbation of Mr. Windham and Lord Grenville, not worth the possessing.

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The only shadow of an objection that could be made to it, was with regard to the circumstances under which the peace was made; which, being precisely at the period when the enemy had assumed an attitude that threatened us with an invasion, seemed to intimate that it was the result of our apprehension of the consequence. Possibly such an inference might have passed in the mind of a vain enemy; but our Ministers are not responsible for the conclusions which vanity may suggest. They remitted the experiment to another occasion, which is now arrived; and I doubt not but, when tried, it will recal the enemy from their error.

We have reason to say, that the peace was received by the almost universal approbation of the country. If there were any dissentients from the joy which that event inspired, their windows paid

for

for their perverseness. Yet there were some, and though but few, they endeavoured to make up for the weakness of their number, by the vehemence of their clamours.

They remind us that they foretold, from the first, the consequences that were to ensue from the peace, and assume much merit from the verification of their predictions. These prophets are very sagacious beings;—they foresaw at what hour the sun ought to shine!!

Do they imagine that our Ministers, because their official situations bound them to a greater respect for decorum towards a person with whom they had so lately made a peace, were without apprehension of its early interruption, because their language intimated another opinion? Do they think that all the possible dangers were not in their minds, because not always on their tongues?

Insensate

Insensate conclusion! Mr. Windham is too wise to make it, though political annoyance being his object, he wishes it to be made by others.

The fact is, it was not so much the peace they hated, as the peace-makers; and even them they hate less, than they love their places; for if they were enraged only by the peace, they ought to be reconciled now that war is come again; yet it seems they are as angry as ever; not because we have a war, but because they have not the conducting of it; being desirous, no doubt, of retrieving their characters by new experiments, which are to prove that they are grown wiser by their miscarriages: and if it were in a matter less important than our existence as a nation, it might be generous to indulge them; but, as it is, we will remain as we are, under an assurance, that it is impossible to be worse than we have been.

But

But the short experience which we have had of our present Ministers, affords us better hopes. It tells us, that we are not likely at least, to be oppressed by vexatious laws, such as were enacted under the ministry of their predecessors. We have no suspensions of the Habeas Corpus;—no sedition bills to silence animadversion on their misrule. Even Cobbett continues to emit his weekly libels, and no one thinks of sending him to Clerkenwell, though all acknowledge that his demerits might well entitle him to such an accommodation. When Treason stalked abroad, and conspired against the anointed head of the Sovereign, they only were pursued to the scaffold, of whose guilt there could remain not the vestige of a doubt. Justice was satisfied with her lawful victims, sparing some even of them, and left the nation free as before. When rebellion had erected her

standard

standard in the sister kingdom, and the streets of her capital were dyed with the blood of the chief of the law, even that horrid outrage, was incapable of moving our Ministers from the rectitude of their purpose. The guilty were separated from the imprudent, the imprudent from the innocent, and none suffered but upon the clearest conviction of their peers. How different this from the rigor practised during the former rebellion in that unfortunate country? If Ireland had been always thus temperately treated, we should probably, have heard less of those violences which brought so many of her citizens to an ignominious death.

What have been the consequences of these wise measures?—The prisons go untenanted of state criminals;—we hear no more of corresponding societies, couching guilty purposes under the semblance of reform. The laws being allowed

their

their usual course, and men feeling themselves free as the constitution designed them to be, are a thousand times more attached to government than they could possibly have been under the rigorous restraints imposed upon them during the last war. The Sovereign moves not now, as before, in the silence of discontented subjects. His presence is hailed with acclamations of unfeigned joy. The people are his guards, and I doubt not, but that he will find, in an army of his Volunteers (discredited as they are attempted to be) the same energies of zeal for the defence of his realm, and the preservation of his sacred person, as he could do among his domestic attendants.

To what are we indebted for this salutary change in the public mind, but to the mildness and true wisdom of the present Administration, who prefer ruling

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by the ordinary maxims of the constitution, rather than by occasional laws of repulsive severity, which alienated the affections of men, and rendered them indifferent to a fate so bad, that it was hardly possible to be worse!!

Yet these are the men whom we are called upon to expel from the administration, as if we were tired of being happy, and had cause to wish for a change. The shafts darted at them, it is true, are not many; but those tipped with venom of uncommon malignity. Each of the Ministers has in his turn participated of their calumny; but the greatest portion of it has been directed to Mr. Addington, as to the most offensive object, from his holding the first place.

They tell us he is wanting in capacity, and certainly his incapacity is proved by the decency of the charge; but let it

be

be remembered, that before he was a Minister, he was a man supposed to be endowed with every talent that could recommend him to public regard; and if his powers are now impaired, it is only what is usual when men arrive at eminent stations, and have competitors who think they would better suit them. As the Speaker of the House of Commons, a function of no mean importance, and for which men of great abilities have always been selected, he acquitted himself with a dignity, wisdom, and impartiality, which so effectually conciliated all parties, that it was difficult to say, whether he was most esteemed by those by whom he was elected, or by those by whom he had been opposed. If more positive testimony be required in his favour, it will be found in the panegyrics of Mr. Pitt, by whom he was proposed for that chair; therefore

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we are reduced, by that circumstance, to the dilemma of admitting, either that Mr. Addington must have been a man of wisdom, or Mr. Pitt a fool, to have given his confidence to one who so little deserved it.

But it seems that Mr. Pitt not only gave his confidence to Mr. Addington, the Speaker, but he also gave him his support and parliamentary influence after he had become Chancellor of the Exchequer, and if he has since seen reason to withdraw it, it must have been for some other reason than for the Peace, which he openly approved, or the present War which he approved also, and justified.

That Mr. Pitt should withdraw his friendship from Mr. Addington, on the score of incapacity, is therefore totally impossible; but it is not impossible that he may have discovered in a successor

something

something that he would not have liked in any man, but least so in one who, having been brought forward, and advanced, (as it is said,) by his means, might have been expected in gratitude to have abandoned the Treasury whenever he was disposed to resume it. At the worst, therefore, it can only be said that Mr. Addington is wanting in gratitude.

But gratitude is a virtue which is not common in ordinary life; let us not then be surprised if it should be wanting in a statesman, where it never yet has been found, as history informs; therefore Mr. Addington, if ungrateful, has as good a right to be so as those who have preceeded him in political life, even as Mr. Pitt, who, in the commencement of his career, has been accused of having conducted himself with as little regard to his obligations to Lord Lansdown.

But

But as to the charge of ingratitude, upon what ground does that rest? on the circumstance of Mr. Pitt's having given his friendship to a man, whose highly estimable qualities irresistibly extorted it; and who returned it with equal affection; and when an equivalent is received, no debt can remain. As to the service rendered to Mr. Addington, by proposing him for the Speaker's chair; certainly that was conferred more in regard to the interest of the house, than to that of Mr. Addington; for if not, if Mr. Pitt proposed a person to so important a station, whom he did not think the best qualified to fill it, he abandoned his duty to an improper motive, and abused the influence which his station gave him to obtrude a person into the chair, which might have been better filled by another; a conclusion which I imagine Mr. Pitt's

Pitt's friends will not be very ready to admit.

As to the next step of Mr. Addington's elevation, which was to the Treasury, for that I understand he was no further indebted to Mr. Pitt, than as Mr. Pitt, by vacating his seat at that board, gave Mr. Addington an opportunity to occupy it. What motive Mr. Pitt might have had for so doing, is not within the compass of my enquiry, further than to assure myself that it was not to accommodate Mr. Addington. I believe it has never been suspected that he did; at the same time it has been perfectly well understood, that Mr. Addington's appointment did not proceed from Mr. Pitt, but from his Sovereign, who chose to be served, not to be commanded.

But if Mr. Addington had been more indebted than he really was to Mr. Pitt, for that appointment, it does not follow that

that he accepted it in deposit with a promise of restitution whenever demanded. Indeed had he so done, his engagement would have been void, because entered into in contravention of a paramount duty to the public, who have a title to his services, and have been so well satisfied with those which he has already performed, as to be little disposed to relinquish their claim to others which they may hereafter receive from him.

It appears, therefore, from the above facts, if correctly stated, that Mr. Addington's obligations to Mr. Pitt are not of so high a nature as to impose on him the duty of an eternal pupilage. The addition of his name and talents to the present administration, would, no doubt, if disembarrassed from those colleagues who formerly urged him to his worst measures, have been accepted with plea-

sure,

sure; but when he thought proper to capitulate for their collective return, it is fortunate that his proposition was rejected, as I am persuaded that even his powers may be dispensed with without loss or injury to the public service*.

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* See "Cursory Remarks upon the State of Parties," where that matter is explained, and where we are told that, previous to the acceptance of the present Ministers, they had the promise of the last of "a constant, zealous, and active support."

The answer to the Cursory Remarks by "a more accurate Observer," does not deny the fact of the promise, but endeavours to palliate the breach of it.

In the simple apprehension of the world, as well as in the construction of statesmen, a promise of a systematic support of any administration, goes to all their measures, as a systematic opposition means an opposition to all measures, which is generally very honourably fulfilled. But the energetic adjuncts, "constant, zealous, and active," remove all doubt as to the nature of the obligation, and imply a pledge of a very cordial assistance. The question, therefore, is, not whether an engagement to such a wide extent was wise or honest, but whether it was made; and that it was made is admitted. It must be admitted also to have been broken; by Lord Grenville immediately,

The talents of Mr. Pitt, if inferred from their consequences, as I have before observed, are more fitted for discourse than for action. In eloquence, indeed, he is unequalled; but after all, what is there so admirable in eloquence, as to entitle it to the precedence which it has usurped over all the other faculties of the understanding, which, if duly appreciated, are of infinitely more value, as conducing to the happiness of society? at the best it is only a mind of

diately, and by Mr. Pitt somewhat later: all this in the ordinary habits of political fidelity.

The reader, who is desirous of knowing more how negociations of that kind are generally conducted, and, particularly, how they were conducted by the father of Mr. Pitt, on a like occasion, may have his curiosity gratified by a perusal of Bubb Doddington's Diary, edited some twenty years ago, by a Mr. Windham, not the Ex-Secretary at War, but another of the same name, who seems to have been a very honest man, with these appropriate mottos:

Et tout pour la Trippe.—*Rabellais.*
And all for Quarter-Day.—*Diary.*

prompt

prompt production, which, with the aid of a flexible tongue, yields its contents with facility. It is not wisdom, though it may assume its type, and is more fitted to rule a rabble than to guide a state.

The orators of antiquity were well known to have been the worst citizens of every state, and I believe those of modern days do not much degenerate from the original character. Of all the productions of the intellect eloquence appears to be the most vendible. If it remains long in the market, it is because too great a price is demanded for it, though it often gets, at last, more than it is worth. It is not among these minor or venal Rhetoricians that Mr. Pitt is to be classed. He is certainly much above all pecuniary price, but he is not above ambition. Some of the wisest heads which this nation ever produced, never engaged in any parlia-

mentary discussion whatever; whilst Cromwell, who is allowed to have been a man of deep project, was never known to have uttered three sentences of common sense in his life.

If, therefore, this quality of eloquence be of so little real value, in the science of government, it is a subject of regret that the same bounds are not prescribed to its effusions in Parliament, as formerly obtained among the club declaimers of this town, who were under the salutary restraint of the hammer; for were that the case, the public business would be dispatched with much more expedition than at present, and thought would have its due preference over words. Wise plans are the result of judgment and reflection, and are matured in the unruffled recesses of the Cabinet, not in the tempest of debate; for judgment digests its measures in silence: where most profound, it is

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the most taciturn; like the current of deep waters, which glide their course, without murmur or ebullition. The real power of the understanding is discovered by its palpable effects; as we recognize the perfection of the mechanism in the simplicity of its structure, and the regularity of its movements; not in the loudness of the noise produced by the friction of its parts.

In that respect, how much superior are our present Ministers to those who preceded them! Our ears are not importuned by elaborate harangues, calculated only to perplex the minds of an auditory, and in their perplexity, to surprise sanctions to measures which would never have been obtained if their objects had been distinctly discovered.

Where has more effective wisdom been displayed than in the military organization of the kingdom? Yet was it traversed

versed longer than decency would permit, not only by factious scribblers, but by others still more factious; whose object being to embarrass, care not at what injury that is to be effected. They predicted the total ruin of the country from the proposed mode of defence, though that defence is now considered to be so completely effectual, as to excite ardent wishes for the arrival of the enemy. My wish is, that if they do come, it may be in small numbers; for I hold the blood of my countrymen as being too precious to be unnecessarily expended, though victory were to be the assured result.

During the short period that Mr. Yorke was possessed of the war department, he displayed such talents in the development of his plans, and in his defence of them against all attacks, direct or oblique, which were levelled for their destruction, as shewed how much the nation

tion had gained by the change in that department, and that he was well qualified for the higher station which he now occupies.

Of Lord Hawkesbury I have not occasion to say much; both because he has been but little attacked, and because he knows well how to defend himself. His answer to Mr. Pitt, on the subject of Mr. Patten's motion of censure, was, perhaps, the most eloquent reproof that right honourable gentleman ever received; and I shall be much mistaken, if it readily escapes from a memory so tenacious as his, of impressions once committed to it.

Of the navy, I can never speak but with admiration. It effects all that the caution of the enemy permits it to accomplish, notwithstanding the false and injurious reports which were circulated at the commencement of the war, of the

nullity

nullity of that part of the national force. It is to be wished, however, that so much gunpowder had not been wasted in the bombardment of their ports, but that it had been reserved for the purchase of more substantial advantages. Of the First Lord, who is now charged with its administration, I do not mean to say more than his merits deserve; for I hear many murmurs against him, on the part of those who, being a step or two lower in the profession, are exposed to mortifications which generous spirits can ill endure. I have besides some recollection of charges preferred against him during the late war, which were never repelled by any arguments more satisfactory than a ministerial veto; but as to the clamours excited by his reform of the naval arsenals, they confer great credit upon him, so far as the reform goes; and it is to be regretted that it should extend only to the

dwarf

dwarf rogues of the State, and cease when it meets with gigantic delinquents, too great even for enquiry, and much too powerful for conviction. There are in our red book numerous offices, with which many of our noble families are acquainted, that could be very conveniently spared from its pages, or which, being curtailed of their salaries or perquisites, down to a reasonable compensation for actual services, would greatly accommodate the nation, and enable the minister to exonerate altogether that class of incomes, which are now only favoured with a smaller ratio of contribution. But this is departing from my subject.

When I see such energy displayed in every department of the State, as was never before known in this country, and behold men prodigal of their time, their money, and their lives, to avert the threatened danger, and submitting to such important

portant sacrifices, from their confidence in an Administration whose rule is in harmony with their feelings, I cannot conceal my surprise, or repress my indignation, at finding that there should be men so wicked, even at this perilous juncture, as to think only of their own miserable interests, and endeavouring to advance them, by depressing us into doubt and suspicion against those, who ought to possess our entire confidence; since with them we must either sink into servitude, or rise in glorious victory. The same old hacknied cant of opposition is now renewed, that has prevàiled at all times, and sometimes but with too much effect, that the State is in danger, and will be ruined, if our Ministers are not removed from their places; which is as much as to say, in plain English, "Gentlemen, take us old Ministers back again, and all will be right."

Deplorable,

Deplorable, indeed, would it be, if this nation, formerly so exuberant of able men in every department of science, should be now so barren of talent, as to have what there is of it, limited to Mr. Pitt and his friends, and not to afford us a second set of Ministers capable of conducting our affairs. It would be a libel on nature to accuse her of such a niggard partiality; and however disposed men might have been, on the first change of the administration to have done her that injustice, I believe they are now very generally recalled from their error, to a full persuasion, that they possess in their present Ministers every thing they could desire, but the power of rectifying the mistakes of their predecessors.

Privations we must suffer, but, in suffering, let it be recollected to whom we are indebted for them: that it is not to

those

those who are now in place, though they impose them, but to those who occasioned the necessity, and entailed it as a legacy on succeeding generations. If we owe five hundred millions, three hundred of them were incurred by Mr. Pitt. If out taxes are of that magnitude, as not only to extract from us all our comforts, but to oblige us to a rigorous observance of lent throughout the year, it is the late administration who have placed us in that distressing predicament. If we entertain five hundred thousand armed men, they are no more than the relative situation of France to this country now imperiously requires. In short, whatever evils we now suffer, or hereafter may suffer, are to be fairly inputed to those who first raised, and then left us buffeted by the tempest: to the pilot who, instead of conducting the ship safely into harbour, as the song has falsely alleged,

quitted

quitted her during the storm, and taking to his cock-boat, arrived safely at the Cinque ports, from whence looking out and seeing the vessel yet escaped from shipwreck, kindly proposes to resume the command, provided he may be accompanied by his old crew; but never shall he have my vote until acquitted by the sentence of a court-martial, for his former dereliction! nor even then, however contrite he may appear; for though penitence may atone for sin, it cannot inspire hope, or afford a well-grounded assurance that our affairs would be better managed by them than they have before been.

No! no! let me not have those who have been tried and miscarried. If I am to suffer the yoke, let it be from hands that impose it with little violence. Such are our present ministers. Their system comprises nothing of vexation. In many instances

instances they have condescended even to public opinion; and wise have they been in so doing; for, by slight sacrifices, they have obtained the solid benefit of a chearful acquiescence to every measure which it has been found necessary to urge to execution.

This facility of concession has, however, been made a subject of reproach by their enemies; and the case of Mr. Horne Tooke's representative eligibility, particularly so to Mr. Addington; but, if any single circumstance in the conduct of that gentleman, could have impressed me with a decisive opinion of his temper and wisdom, that alone would have done it: for supposing the right of exclusion of Mr. Tooke to have been as clear in parliamentary principle, as it was obscure and dubious, yet as the precedents on which it was grounded were to be drawn from the remotest annals of that assembly,

and

and in their application might have produced much heat in the house; it was better to get rid of the question, as he did, by a delaratory law, which established the clerical disability in future, though it left Mr. Tooke in possession of his seat for the short residue of the Parliament. Surely this was not too much to be done, even in respect to the feelings of a gentleman, who, like the Parthians, is formidable in his retreat, and whose extraordinary endowments would almost apologise for the violation of an admitted principle.

That the late Ministry were without any weaknesses of this kind must certainly be acknowledged. Never were they known to have relaxed from a purpose which they had once resolved upon, in deference to the popular wish, however temperately expressed. They ruled as if they thought the true art of ruling consisted

consisted in opposing every desire of the people.

Another objection has been made to Mr. Addington, that he is not of illustrious extraction; and many witty allusions have been made to the profession of his father. Mr. Addington ought to feel grateful for the honour derived to him from a parent who adorned the liberal profession which he practised. He was the friend of the father of Mr. Pitt, and his greatest solace when smitten with pain and affliction in the declining years of his illustrious life. But alas! what earthly friendships can resist the force of political competition? Mr. Addington having the misfortune to please the King and the People; and, to become a Minister, must no longer indulge the hope of having the son of his father's friend for his friend. The hereditary union is dissolved, and all must

must yield to the rankling jealously of state ambition!!!

But if not to be noble be a reproach, how long is it since the family of Pitt have escaped it? Two generations have not yet elapsed since that auspicious epoch; and the reproach to Mr. Addington, if any, may easily be effaced by the same royal favour which advanced him to the eminence he now occupies, and the family of Pitt to the title by which they are now distinguished.

But in a country such as this, where talents and virtue have their due estimation, it is not necessary that Mr. Addington, in order to be great, should be a Lord. The father of Mr. Pitt never could be little, but he was somewhat less when he became one, than he had been when a Commoner. An advance to the Peerage has generally been considered as a retreat

 from

from utility, and an honorary superannuation.

Another reproach has been made to Mr. Addington, that, in the day of his prosperity, he is not unmindful of those who were endeared to him in his youth, that he has remembered his friends, and promoted his relations.

What brother, who was not destitute of the most natural feelings of humanity, ever refused so to do when his friends and relations were men of talents and merit, as those of Mr. Addington are confessed to be? Has not every preceding Minister done the same? Did not Mr. Pitt provide for his brother? and does he not decline a power that now courts him, because his friends and relations are not to partake it with him? Did not Lord Melville extend his tenderness still further, and embracing a whole country with his fraternal

fraternal arms, monopolize the patronage of three Kingdoms, and the two Indies to their use?

Let us hear no more then of reproaches like these, which have no better foundation than captious malignity, or ambitious selfishness, eager to injure, but impotent to effect its desire. The public will esteem Mr. Addington the more for identifying himself with them, for partaking their feelings, and respecting their prejudices. One cause of quarrel only they have with him, and that is for extending the influence of the crown; for as the most valuable prerogative of a Prince is to be beloved by his subjects, Mr. Addington has, within the short period of three years, carried that much further than any of his predecessors during the late, or present reign, were ever able to do. The mildness of the present administration has conciliated the affections

tions of the whole people to their Sovereign; and it is in gratitude for the happiness which we enjoy, that I commit these pages to the press. Mr. Addington knows me not, nor have I ever seen him but in the Speaker's chair. I am not within the reach of his remunerations were he disposed to afford them to me. I am too unambitious to court distinctions, too old to solicit a place, and too rich to want a dinner; and the praises which I give to him and his colleagues, if worth any thing, are gratuitously conferred, not suborned by a bribe.

*FINIS.*

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